

MAINE FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
March 7, 2006
(approved 5/8/2006)

Chair Jeffrey Cammack called the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission to order at 1:00 p.m. in Room 436 of the State House, Augusta. Members present were Representative Patricia Blanchette, Jay Bradshaw, Representative Richard Brown, Senator Bruce Bryant, Stephan Bunker, Chief John Dean, Representative Robert Duplessie, Chief Darrel Fournier, Geoffrey Maker, Alex McPhedran, Senator Richard Nass, Harty Norris, Chief Jethro Pease, Charles Soltan and Leslie Wiles. Members John Cannon, Art Cleaves, Gerry Gay, Edward Johnston, David Niklaus and David Wacker were excused. Guests of the Fire Commission included Representative Richard Sykes; Stephen Hawkes, John Martell, Ron Green, Mike Williams, Richard Wurfel of the Professional Fire Fighters of Maine (PFFM); Chief Michel Lajoie of the Maine Fire Chiefs Association (MFCA); and Paul Gasper of the Maine Association of Police.

A motion by Jethro Pease, seconded by Alex McPhedran, to accept the minutes of the February 7, 2006 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Committee Reports

The Training Facilities committee reports that the Maine Fire Chiefs' will hold a retreat on March 15th and 16th in Bar Harbor. The agenda will include initial discussion on the location and purpose of the proposed state training facility and a facilitator has been hired to assist the group arrive at consensus. The facilitator will also submit a written report on the results of the meeting and a draft will be available at the Fire Commission's April meeting.

The 2006 Spring Conference committee reports that over 300 people have registered for this year's conference at the Augusta Civic Center (ACC) March 21st and 22nd. The Legislative Reception will be held on March 21st at the Augusta Civic Center from 4:00pm -7:30pm. Postcard invitations will be distributed to members of the Legislature. The conference committee explained that the Fire Act Grants workshop will be held in a separate area of the ACC because admission cannot be charged. This will allow persons to attend the Fire Act Grant workshop and not pay the conference fee, as well as conference attendees to attend the Fire Act Grant workshops. Maine Fire Training and Education (MFT&E) have agreed to provide additional work books for the workshop. A suggestion was made to add a discussion on the issue of interoperability and communications to the conference agenda.

The Residential Sprinkler Group announces two events of interest-

- 1) On March 30th, the Cumberland County Fire Chiefs will host an informational workshop on residential sprinklers and
- 2) In May the Maine Fire Chiefs, building officials and local officials will host a conference in Belfast. A workshop on residential sprinklers is scheduled for one of the morning sessions. Additional information will be made available at the April meeting.

The Elections Committee proposed the following candidates for Fire Commission officers.

Chair- Jeffrey Cammack

Vice Chair- Richard Nass

Secretary- Geoffrey Maker

Treasurer- John Dean

Elections will be held at the April meeting.

Legislative Updates

LD 10 “Resolve, To Fund a Study Regarding Health Care for Maine’s Firefighters” LD 10 was passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate and remains on the Appropriations table.

LD 1021 “An Act To Implement Task Force Recommendations Relating to Parity and Portability of Benefits for Law Enforcement Officers and Firefighters” Several members of the 1021 Coalition joined the Fire Commission to discuss the latest developments. Chief Cammack summarized an earlier meeting held this morning with the coalition and discussed the Fire Commission’s initial intent to look for a healthcare bridge for career firefighters and an opportunity for call and volunteer firefighters to buy into some type of healthcare coverage. Members discussed whether the state’s Dirigo health plan would accept call and volunteer firefighters and EMS personnel. Several members suggested asking a representative from the Governor’s Office to attend the April meeting to answer Fire Commission members’ questions. The 1021 Coalition asked if the Fire Commission could endorse the proposed legislation. Members expressed concerns whether they could endorse any language that was not complete or final and felt it was important to see the final language before voting. Members discussed the possibility of a special meeting to be held shortly after receipt of the final draft. The Fire Commission bylaws do not allow electronic voting so members agreed to meet in Augusta for the sole purpose of discussing LD 1021. Members expressed the need to see the final language and any fiscal note prior to the special meeting. The date of the meeting will take place shortly after final language is received by staff who will forward it electronically to members.

A motion by Darrel Fournier, seconded by Dick Brown, to convene a special meeting of the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission for the purpose of discussing LD 1021 and

to move forward with a recommendation. The motion passed unanimously.

LD 1879 “An Act To Enhance Firefighter Safety” (truss construction) The Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee was divided on its vote at the work session. The majority (9) will vote “Ought to Pass as Amended” - the amendment makes it mandatory to mark new construction. The minority vote (4) of the committee is “Ought to Pass as Amended” – this amendment allows the marking to be voluntary. Fire Commission members learned the truss construction industry worked out a compromise to include both wood and steel trusses to be identified on buildings. The cost would be minimal and apply to new construction prior to receiving the certificate of occupancy.

LD 1969 “Resolve, To Evaluate the Public Safety Answering Points for the State of Maine”(Emergency) The Utilities Committee unanimously voted “Ought Not to Pass” on LD 1969. However, Fire Commission members were pleased that significant discussion of PSAPs and communications in Maine and noted increased cooperation among local, state and federal officials.

LD 2044 “An Act To Enhance the Protection of Maine Families from Terrorism and Natural Disasters” (Emergency) LD 2044 is one of two bills submitted by the Task Force to Study Maine’s Homeland Security Needs and was referred to the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee. CJ/PS has scheduled a public hearing on March 20th.

Old Business

The interim report of the Task Force to Study Maine’s Homeland Security Needs was distributed to Fire Commission members. Copies of the report are also available on the Maine Legislature’s website-
<http://www.maine.gov/legis/opla/homsec.htm>

Most of the community forums and public meetings are complete and members are asked to forward their notes to staff who will compile the results for discussion later this spring.

New Business

Fire Commission members discussed the emails that were circulated this month regarding the Fire Commission’s endorsing individuals for heroism and other awards and recognitions. Members expressed concerns the Fire Commission might be treading beyond their original legislative charge, that recognition by other agencies may be more appropriate and the need to verify the stories. Members also agreed the discussion was more appropriate at regular meetings rather than through email discussions. The Fire Commission

established the Best Practices Award in 2002 *to highlight individuals, fire/rescue departments, agencies, organizations, communities and others within Maine who show initiative and creativity; develop, adopt and improve the best ideas; and encourage and support safety and health for emergency responders in Maine.*

Members discussed developing a newsletter for legislators during the next legislative session. Ideas included a one page monthly newsletter that would include proposed legislation important to the fire service, summaries of Fire Commission meetings and other items of interest such as residential sprinklers and PSAPs.

The Fire Commission reports three personnel changes-

- Jack Berry has resigned from the Fire Commission effective immediately.
- Jethro Pease has submitted his resignation from the Fire Commission effective following the May 1st meeting.
- Steve Willis has accepted a new position at SMCC and will no longer be a member of the Fire Commission. David Niklaus is the new administrator of Maine Fire Training and Education and will assume Steve's position on the Fire Commission.

With no further business to come before the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission, Chair Cammack adjourned the meeting at 2:41pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan M. Pinette

FIRE COMMISSION SCHEDULE

Tuesday, April 4 th	Regular Meeting **	State House	1pm
Monday, May 1st	Regular Meeting	Public Safety Building	1pm
Monday, June 5 th	Regular Meeting	Florian Hall	1pm
Monday, July 10 th	Regular Meeting	Florian Hall	1pm

** Election of Officers